

Headwater chub
(*Gila nigra*)

STATUS: None.

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: Headwater chubs are minnows of the family Cyprinidae. The headwater chub is a dark gray or brown fish, often with longitudinal stripes on the sides. While quite similar in shape and appearance to the roundtail chub (*G. robusta*), headwater chub are generally smaller [adults about 435 mm (approximately 17 inches)]. The headwater chub is thought to have originated through hybridization of roundtail and Gila chubs (*G. intermedia*), and is morphologically intermediate to these species in many respects.

HABITAT: Headwater chubs occupy middle to headwater reaches of medium-sized streams of the Gila River basin at elevations of 1,325 to 2,000 m (4,347 to 6,651 ft). Headwater chubs are usually found in large pools and are usually associated with cover such as undercut banks, large pools, or deep places created by obstructions like trees or rocks. Typical adult microhabitat consists of deep, nearshore pools adjacent to swifter riffles and runs.

RANGE: Historical: The historical range of the headwater chub in Arizona was small and was limited to several headwater areas within the Gila River basin. Those included the Tonto Creek subbasin within the Salt River drainage, east-side tributaries in the middle Verde River basin, the upper Gila River and its forks, and the San Carlos River basin.

Current: The known present range of headwater chub includes 13 streams in the Verde River basin, Tonto Creek subbasin, and San Carlos River basin in Yavapai, Gila, and Graham counties, Arizona.

REASON FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY: Headwater chub populations have declined due to a combination of habitat loss and degradation related to dams, diversions, groundwater pumping, mining, recreation, livestock grazing, and competition and predation from non-native fish.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: In Arizona: National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, various Native American nations, the State of Arizona, and private.

NOTES: The headwater chub was described in 2000, clarifying a long history of confusion over the systematic relationships of *Gila* species in the Gila River basin. The species also occurs in the upper Gila River basin in New Mexico, in Grant and Catron counties.